

REMARKS

Claims 1-15 are pending. By this Amendment, claims 1 and 5 are amended.

Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102

The Examiner rejected claims 1-4, 7, and 9-12 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a) as being anticipated by Ikegaya (U.S. Patent No. 6,439,663).

Applicant has amended independent claim 1 to clarify the invention. The retainer portion is now defined as having an arcuate shape elongated in a circumferential direction of the fastener so as to increase flexural rigidity of the fastener. This feature of the invention is not found in the prior art. Ikegaya requires a large space to rigidify the fastener because Ikegaya utilizes additional securing members such as bolts. The invention of amended claim 1 does not require the large space as Ikegaya. Accordingly, Ikegaya does not teach or suggest the retainer portion of the present invention. Claims 2-4, 7, and 9 are dependent on amended claim 1. Accordingly, claims 1-4, 7, and 9 are believed to be patentable.

Applicant respectfully traverses the Examiner's rejection of claims 10-12 as being anticipated by Ikegaya. Claim 10 includes the limitation "the retainer portion is at least partly opposed to the locking member." According to the structure defined by claim 10, the fastener can be rigidified at a portion corresponding to the locking member. The expanded area of the retainer portion (85) cited by the Examiner is not opposed to the lock gear (20) of Ikegaya. Therefore, Ikegaya does not teach or suggest the retainer portion as defined in claim 10. Claims 11 and 12 are dependent on claim 10. Accordingly, claims 10-12 are believed to be patentable.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 5, 6, and 8 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but were indicated allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Applicant has amended claim 5 to incorporate the limitations of its base claim (claim 1) and intervening claim (claim 2), which, according to the Office Action, places the claim in condition for allowance. Therefore, Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner withdraw the objection.

Claim 6 now depends from amended claim 5, was amended to include the limitations of its base claim (claim 1) and intervening claim (claim 2). Therefore, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw the objection.

Claim 8 now depends from amended claim 1, which, as indicated above, was amended to clarify the invention. Therefore, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw the objection.

The Examiner indicated claims 13-15 are allowed. Applicant appreciatively acknowledges the Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter.

CONCLUSION

Claims 1-15 are pending. By this Amendment, claim 1 and 5 are amended. In view of the foregoing, it is submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable consideration and prompt allowance of the application are respectfully requested.

The Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned if the Examiner believes it would be useful to advance prosecution.

Respectfully submitted,



Douglas J. Christensen
Registration No. 35,480

Customer No. 24113
Patterson, Thunte, Skaar & Christensen, P.A.
4800 IDS Center
80 South 8th Street
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55402-2100
Telephone: (612) 349-3001